



Series: Know Your Bible

**Lesson: 10.–11. Developing Your
Discernment**

- **DISCERNMENT**

- Definition (MacArthur): the ability to understand, interpret, and apply truth skillfully
- It comes down to the application of Scripture and reason together.
 - What is the relationship between God's revelation and human reason?

Phil. 1:9–11 – And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

- **Discernment in Action**

- _____ vs. Discernment
 - We are called to be *discriminating*.
 - We should make careful distinctions between truth and error yet do so in love and good faith.
- Discerning _____ (1 Tim. 4)

Tit. 1:9 – holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

- Elders should be able and expected to discern between truth and error and proclaim those distinctions to their flocks.
- Discerning _____

1 Thess. 5:19–22 – Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

- All believers are to ‘examine’ what they’re taught (1 Thess. 2:4) against Scripture (Acts 17:10–12).
 - We’re supposed to use discernment to make good judgments of what we see and hear.
- Discerning _____
- We’re called to judge actions too (Matt. 18:12–20; 1 Cor. 5:1–6:11).
 - We should show discernment regarding the lives of our brothers and sisters to protect both them and the Church.
- Discernment and the Sufficiency of _____

2 Thess. 2:15 – So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

- Discernment is going back to God’s Word to shape our thinking.

○ Discernment and Loving the _____

- Discernment is rooted in *clinging* to the truth (Deut. 6:4–9; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13–14).

1 Cor. 15:1–2 – Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

- Discerning truth means we will not be content with false unity rooted in deception.

○ Discernment and Opposing _____

- We need to keep a careful balance of being aware of false teaching (2 Thess. 2:1–2; 1 Tim. 4:1–3; 2 Tim. 2:16–18; Tit. 1:10–14) and not falling into *syncretism*.
- Good discernment knows to watch out for the *almost* right and avoid following it.

2 Cor. 11:12–15 – *But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.* ¹³*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.* ¹⁴*No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.* ¹⁵*Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.*

- **A Recipe for Discernment**

- Desire _____

Prov. 2:3–6 – *For if you cry for discernment,
Lift your voice for understanding;
⁴If you seek her as silver
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
⁵Then you will discern the fear of the Lord
And discover the knowledge of God.
⁶For the Lord gives wisdom;
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

- _____ for Discernment (1 Kings 3:5–12)

Jas. 1:5 – But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- _____ the Truth
 - We need to be doers of the Word and not merely hearers (Jas. 1:22) if we want discernment to grow and actually affect our lives for the better.
- Follow Discerning _____
 - We shouldn't blindly follow anyone, but discernment can be grown by following the example of others.
- Depend on the _____

John 16:13 – But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

1 Cor. 2:11–16 – For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. ¹⁴But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. ¹⁶For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- We should not be ‘leaning on our own understanding’ (Prov. 3:5), but rather depending on God to illuminate our thinking to be able to discern truth from error and avoid deception.

○ Study the _____

2 Tim. 2:15 – Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

What Do We Do with These Truths?

1. How would you describe the tension between relying on God's Word and using our intellects to understand and apply it?
2. What are some practical opportunities we have in everyday life to exercise discernment? How is that important?
3. How should we use discernment to be aware of evil while still 'abstaining' from it?
4. All of the steps for cultivating discernment are basic Christian disciplines; which of them is hardest for you to apply specifically to discernment?

Blanks: Divisiveness, Leaders, Judgment, Correction, Scripture, Truth, Evil, Wisdom, Pray, Obey, Leaders, Holy Spirit, Scriptures